

MARCH 2021

THE CURRENT



Energy news from around Philadelphia and beyond



In this month's newsletter -

- * **Challenges of 2020**
- * **Swarthmore Borough first to use renewable natural gas**
- * **Meet members and learn renewable energy as a Member Ambassador**
- * **Spring is coming and so is Earth Month**
- * **Plus, coming events, what's new in our blog, and what we're reading**

Looking Back on 2020's Two-Dimensional World

About this time every year, we like to let our members know how your cooperative did during the prior one. But 2020 was unique in too many ways. Too many people suffered loss of their jobs, their health, and even their lives. Everyone endured uncertainty and doubt. So, it hardly seems fitting, until all of us are vaccinated, safe, and back to work, to spend a lot of time dwelling on The Energy Co-op's good fortune.

RSVP here to join us virtually for either lunch on 3/22 or dinner on 3/24 for a conversation with Executive Director Ron Fisher.

Tasty recipes provided ahead of time!

Still, it bears mentioning that our luck begins with you, our members. Despite the varied difficulties you faced, you continued to support our programs and our shared mission of helping our cooperative community affordably and sustainably buy, use, and understand energy. By the end of last year, there were many more of you than at the beginning—about 600 more. And those of us who are lucky to serve as your staff were able to meet hundreds of you at about 40 events held during 2020, most of which in the two-dimensional world afforded by Zoom. We look forward to restoring that third dimension sometime later this year. Also, the operating results of your cooperative exceeded budget for 2020 and its financial position remains strong and debt-free. We were also able to restructure and increase our staff's capabilities during 2020 in ways that should lead during this and coming years to new programs, improved member service and benefits, and continued growth.

In short, we count ourselves among the very fortunate, and we are deeply grateful for your commitment and support of your cooperative.

Swarthmore Borough Switches to RNG

Last week, we shared the exciting announcement that Swarthmore Borough is combatting the climate crisis by heating its municipal buildings with [renewable natural gas \(RNG\)](#) from The Energy Co-op. Swarthmore is the first municipality in Pennsylvania that we are aware of to make the switch from conventional gas. The full press release is available [on our website](#).

Instrumental throughout the process was the Swarthmore Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), which includes several Energy Co-op members. On the commitment to facilitate the use of 100% renewable sources by the government, residents, and businesses by 2050, Energy Co-op member and EAC Chair Annie Fox said, “Switching to RNG is a natural interim step. Swarthmore hopes to lead the way for other local communities seeking to play their part in a vital global energy transformation.” You can find more about our members’ involvement with their local EACs in our [latest blog post](#).

As members already participating in The Energy Co-op’s RNG program are aware, RNG is primarily methane captured from organic waste decomposing in landfills and other waste treatment facilities. The methane is then repurposed as a clean, more environmentally friendly energy source. Any household, business, or municipality that receives a gas bill from PECO or PGW can [enroll in our program](#).

Member Ambassador Training Begins March 11

The Energy Co-op’s [Member Ambassador training series](#) is a fun and easy way to make new friends, make a difference, and learn more about renewable energy. Don’t miss this unique opportunity to develop the skills to connect your neighborhood, friends, and community with your energy cooperative.

You’ll meet other members of our cooperative community while growing our local, green energy economy. And you’ll be able to – literally! – give the gift of renewable energy to friends and neighbors.

Participants will meet from **6pm-7pm on Thursdays, March 11th, 18th, and 25th**. [Register today](#) or send an email to Member Recruitment Lead Meryl Sands at meryl@theenergy.coop if you have any questions.

Earth Month Preview

Earth Month is just four weeks away and The Energy Co-op is hard at work with our partners developing fun and social ways to celebrate throughout April. Kicking things off, Meryl will present our RNG webinar [on April 13th, detailing the what, how, and why of our unique, innovative program](#). All Energy Co-op members and their family, friends, and neighbors who are considering joining are welcome to join. [Register here](#) for this free 45-minute program.

Also, keep an eye on [Green Philly](#) for an article, interview, and webinar on how to shop for renewable electricity, all showcasing different aspects of our work and impact. We're also joining with both [Weavers Way](#) and [Mariposa Food Co-op](#) to inform their members and ours about The Energy Co-op's renewable electricity program in another webinar (date and time to be announced). Both food cooperatives will include information about renewable energy in their newsletters and emails to their members, as well as encouraging their communities to join us for the webinar in April. For our part, we are pleased to encourage you, our members, to support these great co-ops and their commitment to healthy food and sustainable practices.

Check back in next month's *The Current* for more information on what we'll be up to throughout Earth Month.

What We're Reading

[Power experts cite gas constraints as main cause of ERCOT outages, but system planning questions remain](#)

As rolling outages plagued Texas, power sector experts found themselves fighting against misinformation about the root of the problem.

Utility Dive

[Natural gas companies have their own plans to go low-carbon](#)

Natural gas companies face an existential threat as more governments and businesses tackle climate change and vow to zero-out carbon emissions.

NPR

[Ford bets \\$29B on leading the 'electric vehicle revolution'](#)

Ford CEO Jim Farley says that it will invest \$29 billion in autonomous vehicles and electric vehicles through 2025, a dramatic ramp-up of its spending in those areas.

Utility Dive

[Wolf budget proposes Energy Communities Trust Fund to ease transition of workers, communities impacted by power plant closures](#)

The Fund would be financed by a portion of the expected \$300 MM generated by the sale of allowance under the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction

Program covering power plants compatible with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

PA Environment Digest

Blog Entries

[Energy Co-op Members Make Positive Impacts Through Environmental Advisory Councils](#)

Features the work of our members with the Swarthmore EAC, East Goshen EAC, and Delaware County Sustainability Commission.

By Member Services Lead Noah Swistak

[Could What Happened In Texas Happen Here?](#)

A discussion of the differences between that state's electricity grid and ours, and why not all third-party suppliers are the same.

By Executive Director Ronald Fisher

Coming Events

[Member Ambassador Training Series](#)

Thursdays, March 11 – 25 @ 6:00pm

[Register Here!](#)

Meet other members of our cooperative community, learn about renewable energy, and help grow our local, green energy economy.

[Virtual Lunch/Dinner with Executive Director Ronald Fisher](#)

Monday, March 22 @ Noon (lunch) or

Wednesday, March 24 @ 5:30pm (dinner)

[RSVP Here!](#)

Join us for a meal and discussion about what The Energy Co-op is up to and what's in store for the remainder of 2021 and beyond.

[Renewable Natural Gas Webinar](#)

Tuesday, April 13 @ 5:30pm

[Register Here!](#)

Learn about RNG and the benefits of our program, which puts to good use landfill methane recovered without drilling or fracking.



THE ENERGY CO-OP

Leading the Energy Evolution

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